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THE ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE

TURKS IN EUROPE.

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THE

ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE

TURKS IN EUROPE.

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

27679

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXVIII.

PREFACE.

THE facts contained in the following Discourse have not any novelty to recommend them: they are taken from D'Ohsson, Thornton, Busbek, Volney, and the numerous travellers in the East. The form in which these facts are brought together was adopted with a view of illustrating the history of Europe; and the Discourse is now published because it

contains, in a small space, what is presumed to be a correct account of the government of an important and interesting part of the world, during more than three centuries.

THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TURKS IN EUROPE.

With the fall of Constantinople was extinguished for ever the last vestige of the majesty of Rome. However little the intrigues of the Greek court and church might resemble the magnanimous daring and plain wisdom of the Roman people, yet the name of Augustus, the law and the army of Rome carried on a species of identity; and the fall of the empire, which was once extended from

visible proof of the vicissitudes of human affairs, repeated as he entered it, a Persian distich, signifying:

The spider hath woven her web in the palace of emperors,
And the owl hath sung her watch-song in the towers of Efrasiyab.

He afterwards visited and comforted the wife of Luca Notara, the great duke and admiral, who was ill with terror and grief. These actions seem to betoken a polished and generous conqueror. But the Greek and Latin historians affirm that on the same day he stained his victory at once by debauchery and cruelty; that he celebrated his triumph by a drunken banquet, and amid the excesses of the table ordered the execution of Luca Notara and his two sons, with circumstances disgraceful to his fame. This story may or may not be true: there are

other relations credulously reported by Knolles, such as that of the conversion of St. Sophia into a stable, and the massacre of thousands of the Greek inhabitants while the sultan was feasting, which may be safely disbelieved; the latter indeed is quite inconsistent with the care which Mahomet showed to preserve the population of the city. He allowed a term of three months for those who had fled to return to their homes, promising, on this condition, the restoration of their property; he ransomed many of the Greek captives from his soldiers; allowed them the free exercise of their religion, and appropriated a portion of the churches for the performance of Christian worship. Some historians indeed have affirmed, that half the city was surrendered by capitulation while the other half was taken by assault; and that the churches

of the capitulating half were religiously preserved to the Christians by Mahomet; but this relation is no way entitled to credit.* In order to repeople the deserted part of the city, Mahomet commanded ten thousand families from different provinces to come and establish themselves at Constantinople.†

The fall of Constantinople was regarded with various sentiments by the

* See Cantemir, b. iii. note 17, for an account of the articles, with their revocation by Selim; and Gibbon, vol. xii. for a refutation of the story. See likewise, in the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Paris, 1825, a paper by the learned M. Hammer, on the authority of Cantemir as an historian. He proves that this celebrated writer has been rated far too highly.

† For an account of the capture of Constantinople see Chalcocondyles, b. viii.; Ducas, c. 40, 41; Phranza; Leonardus Chiensis. An excellent edition of the last-named historian was printed at Paris, at the expense of Sir Charles Stuart, while ambassador to the court of France.

contemporaries of that event. Many of the Greeks considered it as the destined retaliation of the people of Asia for the capture of Troy. The priests of the church of Rome pointed it out to their congregations as the natural consequence of the schism of the Greek people, and their obstinate refusal to embrace the orthodox faith and submit to the authority of the Roman pontiff.* The chivalry of Europe again saw in the fall of the

* Leonardus Chiensis, addressing the Pope, thus rationally accounts for the defeat of the Greeks: "Heu! quæ spes in populo duro, qui tot annis sine vitâ spirituali abscissus a capite manebat. Quomodo non desperati, quomodo non abjecti a Deo, &c. qui ab ecclesiâ elongati Romanâ in cordis duritie permanserunt?"—p. 19. The Greeks might have given him an answer similar to one which was made to the Duke of Burgundy, who made a like remark when contending against Marlbro': "Does your Royal Highness think that Marlbro' goes to mass oftener than we do?"

Greek capital a grievous stain on their honour, and sighed to restore the fame of Christian knighthood over Saracen and Turk. Placed at a long distance of time from the event, our views differ widely from all of them. Considering the fall of Constantinople as an important epoch in history, we propose to inquire:—I. The extent of the conquest. II. The character and genius of the conquerors. III. The causes of their success. IV. The kind of government they established. V. The causes which arrested their progress and have led to their decline.

I. The remainder of the reign of Mahomet was distinguished by a series of successful enterprises, in which the fraud of the Turkish sultan was not less conspicuous than his force. Historians have

reckoned that he conquered two empires, twelve kingdoms, and two hundred towns.* The triumphs of a barbarous host over an effeminate and divided people, afford few details interesting at this distance of time; but the fate of Athens will excite the curiosity of the classical student, and the defence of Rhodes may awaken the sympathy of the Christian reader.

Athens, after passing through various hands, had fallen under the sovereignty of one of the Acciaioli, a family which had its origin at Florence, and subsists there in poverty at the present day. The last prince or duke of Athens of this name had left his son, a minor, under

* See Cantemir, b. iii. note 26, for the kingdoms and towns. The two empires were Constantinople and Trebizond.

the care of his widow. She fell in love with a Venetian of the name of Palmerio, who, induced by her or his own depravity, that he might become legal master of her person and authority, destroyed his wife by poison. Franco, the nephew of the last duke, who aspired to the sovereignty, encouraged the people to punish the crime of their rulers, assembled a formidable party, arrested the regent and her son, and a few months afterwards caused them both to be put to death at Megara. Palmerio had recourse to the protection of the Turks, and the sultan was happy to embrace a quarrel which promised to add a new state to his dominion. His vizier marched against Franco; and the usurper without resistance consented to exchange his guarded citadel of Athens

for the plains of Bœotia: Attica became a province of the Turkish empire.* The same good fortune attended the arms of Mahomet in the Morea: two of the Palæologi, brothers of the late emperor, implored his succour against the Albanians, and he afforded them his usual protection; videlicet, that of taking their territory to himself.

The siege of Rhodes was an enterprise of much greater difficulty. This island was in possession of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem: on the approach of danger they assembled in council, and agreed to pay implicit obedience to their Grand Master, D' Aubusson, who joined to the wisdom of a prudent commander the ardent courage of a knight, and the

* Chalcocondyles, l. ix.

enthusiastic faith of a martyr. At his call, the Knights of St. John assembled from all parts of Europe, bringing with them some of the bravest of the nobility of France and Italy. Among them was the Viscount D'Aubusson, brother of the Grand Master. The brothers were descended from Renaud D'Aubusson, brother of Turpin, who was Bishop of Limoges in the year 898. Louis de Craon, Scaligero della Scala, and others whose names were spurs to their valour, joined this illustrious company. The Turks, on the other hand, were directed by Misach Palæologus, of the imperial family of Constantinople, who had risen by apostasy to the rank of first Pacha of the Turkish monarchy.

The force destined to besiege Rhodes was composed of 160 large vessels, and

100,000 troops. In May, 1481, the Turks commenced the siege, opening their first battery against Fort St. Nicholas, which was esteemed the key of the town of Rhodes. The Grand Master himself, accompanied by his brother, defended the breach: his helmet was knocked off by a stone; he took a soldier's hat, and continued to fight with desperation, till the Janizaries, after suffering immense loss, were obliged to retreat. The Turkish general then resorted to other measures, and directed his artillery against the quarter of the Jews, where the wall was known to be weak; but when his cannon had made considerable impression, he found to his dismay, that D'Aubusson had built a second wall behind the former, of stronger and better materials. Thus foiled a second time, he attempted by

emissaries to poison the Grand Master; but the plot was discovered, and the emissaries torn to pieces by the people. He then returned to the plan of attacking the fort of St. Nicholas. This fort was separated from the Turkish camp by a narrow channel: the Pacha built a bridge of boats, and one of his soldiers, diving a considerable depth, fastened an anchor to a rock under water, close to the fort, and passing a cable through the ring of the anchor, hoped to draw the bridge of boats to the wall. But an English sailor, of the name of Gervas Roger, who perceived the stratagem of the Turk, dived in his turn under water, and detached the cable. The Turks, thus baffled in their stratagem, towed their bridge, by means of a number of boats, close to the fort. They began

the attack during the night, and attempted to scale the wall, but the fire of the Christians, directed by the sound, was exceedingly destructive. The few who reached the top of the wall were all slain. After several repulses, the Turks still renewed the assault; the whole of the night passed amidst the noise of artillery, the confused voices of the assailants, the cries of the wounded, and the explosions caused by the fire-ships of the Grand Master. When day at length appeared, the cannon from the fort broke the bridge, and all who were on it were drowned. The Turks, in despair, were obliged to retire with the loss of numbers of their best and bravest soldiers. After some fresh attacks, the Pacha tried the way of negociation, and proposed to the besieged an honourable

capitulation. Many of the Knights, seeing the immense force of the enemy, were inclined to listen to terms, and even blamed the Grand Master for his obstinacy; but D'Aubusson, using the absolute power with which he had been invested, called the Knights together, and said, "Gentlemen, if any one of you does not think himself in safety in the place, the fort is not so strictly blockaded but what I can secure his departure." A general silence ensued. "If you wish to remain among us," continued he, "leave every thing to me; I declare that I will cut off the head of the first man who shall speak of capitulation." Filled with shame and admiration, the Knights defended the place with new vigour. The most formidable assault of the Turks was yet to come.

Two thousand five hundred of their best soldiers mounted and gained the wall unperceived by the garrison. The Grand Master himself flew to the spot, and led his chosen companions to the attack of their own defences. He was wounded in five places, but still pushing onwards he inspired his followers with such heroic valour, that they drove the Turks back in confusion. Had he been killed, the place must have fallen; but this successful effort crowned his admirable exertions. The Pacha Palæologus, finding his army disabled and dispirited, at length raised the siege, and carried back to Constantinople the fleet and army.*

1481.—This defeat was soon after followed by the death of Mahomet. He

* See Vertot, Hist. de Malthe. Mignet, Hist. de l'Empire Ottoman.

expired in the 51st year of his age, at a time when he was preparing to make war at once upon the Persians and the Christians. He ordered these words to be engraved upon his tomb; "I intended to conquer Rhodes, and subdue proud Italy." Thus, insatiate of glory, he struggled with death itself for an addition to his fame.

The memory of Mahomet the Second is revered by the Turks as that of a great man. Undoubtedly he was brave, skilful, and enterprizing; endeared, moreover, to his nation by the capture of Constantinople, which established the Turkish empire in Europe. Yet he was not always successful: Scanderbeg often defeated his armies, and Hunniades obliged him to raise, with immense loss, the siege of Belgrade, which he had

undertaken in person. Many examples of his perfidy and cruelty are adduced by the Christian historians, whose narrations, however, must be read with some abatement. Among other instances they allege, that by the capitulation of Negropont, formerly Eubœa, Mahomet promised the garrison that he would guarantee their heads with his own; but when in possession of the place, he ordered the brave governor, Arezzo, to be sawed through the middle, saying, that he had answered for their heads, but not for their sides. The daughter of the governor, having refused to yield to his brutal desires, fell by his hand.*

* This has been supposed to be the origin of the story of Irene, which is unknown to the older historians. It is first related by the Italian novelist, Bandelli, who professes to have received it from

Another instance of the cruel character of Mahomet is too remarkable to be omitted. His eldest son, Mustapha, had gained some advantages over the Persians, and had thereby excited the jealousy of his father. An occasion for indulging it arose. A young wife of Achmet, the vizier or first pacha, going to the bath, violated by accident or design the Turkish customs, and letting fall her veil, displayed to the eyes of the prince beauty which he was unable to resist. He followed her into the bath. When Achmet returned from the army he complained to his sovereign of the injury he had sustained: Mahomet dismissed his offended servant with mock-

Appiano, a celebrated physician. On this slender authority the story has been adopted as an historical fact by Camerarius, Sagredo, Vertot, and Knolles.

ery, but at the same time sent for his son, and loaded him with the most bitter reproaches. Mustapha spoke of this treatment to his friends with too evident resentment, which coming to the ears of the Sultan, his death was decreed, and he was strangled within three days after the interview with his father.

Mahomet left a flourishing empire; the capital adorned with new buildings, and two palaces of his own erection. One of them is now the Eski Serai, where the concubines of deceased sultans reside, or rather are imprisoned.

Bajazet the Second, the son and successor of Mahomet, continued to augment the Turkish dominions. In the Morea, on the Danube and on the Niester, he captured fortresses, and strengthened his frontiers. Selim, his younger

son, in a reign of seven years, was crowned with much more brilliant success. He defeated the Curds and Turcmans, and by the decisive battle of Meritz Dabik gained possession of Egypt, Syria and Palestine. He died in 1519, leaving a great name as a conqueror, but loaded with the epithet of the Cruel.

Thus, in two centuries from the time when Othman was at the head of 400 families, the Turks had possessed themselves of some of the fairest regions of the globe, and acquired the richest parts of that empire which the Romans had called the World, and whose subjugation they esteemed the proof of their superiority in valour and wisdom over all the nations of the globe. The dominions of the Turks comprehended Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Caramania, Greece, Alba-

nia, Bosnia, Servia and Macedonia: they contained Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Athens, Sparta, Thebes and Constantinople: they were watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Volga and the Danube.

The establishment of such an empire naturally leads us to inquire what was the character and genius of the conquering people.

II. The primitive character of the Turks is a simple one; it is that of the pastoral or warlike nations; they are by turns active and indolent, cruel and merciful; easily excited to combat, but with difficulty induced to labour; equally pleased amid the toils of war and the luxury of repose. In their general mode of living, they are temperate and even

abstemious; implicit followers of the commands of their Prophet, and haughty despisers of all other institutions. By nature they are frank, candid and sincere; but too barbarous to consider properly the obligation of a treaty, or the sanctity of a promise, more especially with regard to nations of a different faith. Venality seems to have been long a blot upon their character. Integrity is the virtue of extreme simplicity or extreme refinement; the Turks soon passed the one point, and never reached the other. Yet, although the possession of a rich empire has tended greatly to corrupt their manners, the noble nature of the savage is still perceptible; the generosity of the Turk is spontaneous, and even his injustice, though violent, has something which savours of hardihood and grandeur.

The Turks appear to be distinguished from the nations which occupy the rest of Europe in nearly every circumstance. The ample folds of their garments, their shorn heads covered by a turban, their long beards, their stately bearing, form a direct contrast with the trim dress and coxcomb fashions of our Christian communities. Nor is there less difference in substance than in outward appearance. The Turk is moved by few passions, and those few carry him straight to their object; if he is revengeful, he takes away the life of his enemy; if he is covetous, he seizes the possessions of those who are weaker than he is; if he is amorous, he buys and shuts up in his seraglio the object of his love. He has no conception of the complicated intrigue, the perpetual

bustle, the varying opinions, which attend and influence the business of life in our northern countries. Still less can he imagine the active society; the distinctions of rank; the conversation without any thing to say; all the toys, in short, by which vanity seeks to be remarked, and the love of novelty requires to be gratified. His life is simple, tranquil, dull, we should say, when not moved by the great passions of our nature. A steady trade-wind carries him to port, or a calm leaves him motionless; of the varying state of our atmosphere, and all its shifting breezes, he has no adequate conception: he wonders at and pities our activity. Whether these dispositions are suited or not to promote the happiness of the individual, may admit of a doubt; but it is quite

evident they are unfavourable to the progress of a nation. The busy motion of commerce, the disinterested ardour of science, the continual desire of distinction, the slow advancement of patient industry, the passion for notoriety, and the favours of what is called public opinion, are the wheels upon which the great machine of civilized society is moved forward; they are all unknown to or despised by the Turk.

Much of the form, and many of the events of our communities, are owing to the admission of women in every part of our private and public life. This great element of pleasure and of anxiety is wanting to the Turks. In their behaviour to women, the policy of this people is dictated by a mixture of the most delicate respect, gross sensuality, and re-

fined jealousy. They admit no stranger, nor even their dearest friend, to see the face of their wives: on the other hand, the apartment of the women is sacred from intrusion, and a Turkish wife may hold property even when the husband has not that power. The ladies of the harem may go out in the street to attend the mosque or visit their friends; but if their lord is rich they are always followed by numerous attendants, who guard and preserve, or are intended to preserve, his honour.

This is certainly not the place to discuss the pretensions of Mahomet to the character of a prophet; but it may be permitted to inquire in what manner his doctrines affected the lives and conduct of the nations who believed in his divine mission.

There are two modes by which religion may principally become instrumental to the happiness and moral excellence of man in this life. First, it may, by its precepts, place an inward check upon those passions which men are apt to consider as venial, which laws seldom reach, and society imperfectly restrains. Secondly, it may hold out a prospect of eternal reward and of eternal punishment; to console virtue dejected by misfortune, and alarm wickedness in the pride of prosperity and power. It is evident that the Christian religion accomplishes these two objects. Leaving society to inculcate courage and patriotism, and other qualities of the same kind, which never fail of having their incentives and their applause amongst men, it enforces the more difficult vir-

tues; inculcates the restraint of passion, temperance, humility, and forgiveness of injuries. It likewise holds out a prospect of future reward and retribution for good and for evil. Let us see how the Mahometan religion is calculated to obtain the same ends.

1st. Some verses of the Koran, it is true, lay a restraint on the indulgence of revenge. It is related of Hassan, son of Ali, that a slave, having thrown a dish on him boiling hot, fell down on his knees, and repeated from the Koran, "Paradise is for those who bridle their anger:" Hassan answered, "I am not angry." The slave continued, "and for those who forgive men:" "I forgive you," said Hassan. The slave, finishing the verse, added, "for God loveth the beneficent." "Since it is thus," answered

Hassan, "I give you your liberty, and four hundred pieces of silver."* But the restraint of passion is far from being pushed to its full extent by the pretended prophet of Mecca. In other places of his Koran, Mahomet contents himself with simply commanding that men shall content themselves with a pecuniary compensation, or that, at all events, the retaliation shall not exceed the offence. So large an admission evidently destroys the whole value of the precept; for who shall judge fairly in his own case? and how shall the passion be restrained when the amount of revenge, and not the revenge itself, is the object of blame? Whilst thus imperfect in restraining the

* Sale's Koran, c. 3.

bad passions, Mahomet swells his volume with general praises of liberality and generosity, and much commendation of those virtues to which a man of a warm heart requires no incitement. After the manner of the teacher have been the disciples. The Turks are generous, humane, charitable to the wretched and miserable; they even extend their kindness to the happiness of the inferior animals; but when their passions are roused, when their pride is offended, or their pleasures disturbed, there is no more ferocious or more destructive animal than one of these pious followers of the faith of Islam.

2d. The promise and the menace of a future state, so powerful an engine in the hands of a religious leader, was not converted by Mahomet in an efficient

manner to the purposes of morality. The orthodox doctrine of the Mahometan religion is, that every Mussulman who dies in the belief of its doctrines, arrives sooner or later in Paradise. Faith, and faith alone, constitutes the difference between eternal punishment and eternal reward. It is true that a vicious believer is obliged to expiate his crimes in purgatory for a longer or a shorter period; but all, the murderer as well as the saint, the idiot as well as the sage, receive at length the reward of eternal happiness.*

* The heterodox Mœutziles maintain that good works are necessary for salvation, and believe that infants have a place assigned them between paradise and hell. A doctor of this class was asked by his disciple, how the want of good works could be imputed to infants as a crime, since they were not permitted to live to perform them: "God abridges their days," answered the Scheykh, "by virtue of his mercy, for he sees in them rebellious children, who, if they grew

This doctrine, however much its tendency may be softened by the commentaries of learned doctors, is found to have the pernicious effect of reconciling the wicked to their profligate course of life, and making them deaf to moral exhortation. Overlooking the interval of pain and punishment, the orthodox criminal is satisfied with his portion in this world and the next; he willingly reposes in present enjoyment, and the hope of a certain heaven, without much concern

up, would be vicious and inclined to infidelity. Such will be the answer of God, at the day of judgment, to children who complain of being cut off in their youth." "And if then," said the disciple, "men who have been wicked reproach divine mercy with having allowed them to live instead of cutting them off in infancy, what will the merciful God reply?" The Scheykh was so struck with this objection, that he immediately joined the Sunnys or orthodox believers.—D'Ohsson, t. i. p. 50.

for the pains of a purgatory at once distant and limited.

There are some other points of the Mahometan religion which are worth a passing remark.

In the natural tendency of all things to corruption, men are but too prone to convert the most sublime creed and the most perfect precepts into a collection of forms and ceremonies. Even in the purest faith it requires the utmost vigilance of an enlightened people to preserve the true spirit of religion. But Mahomet, from the very origin, assigned to his followers such a number of minute duties, as are sufficient to absorb all the pious propensities of an ordinary man. Of these, the performance of the five daily prayers, before sunrise, at noon, in the afternoon, at sunset, and at night,

instituted in honour of Adam, of Abraham, of Jonas, of Jesus, and of Moses, is the most important, and no one is reckoned a good Mussulman if he fails in his duty on any of these occasions. Next come the ablutions, and it would require a volume to tell how much of the person must be washed, how much of the garments worn or laid aside, what constitutes a soil or stain, and how deep the water must be in which the true Mussulman performs his lustrations. The fast of the Ramazan is another institution which employs the whole attention of the faithful, and compensates for the omission of more important duties. All these ceremonies and rites obtain a superstitious reverence from the Mahometan people, to the neglect of those pure feelings,—of that honest, but humble,

wish to do right, which is the seed of virtue and the basis of true piety.

III. If the religion of Mahomet was by no means a perfect system for the improvement of mankind, it was well adapted to unite the wandering Arabs of the desert, and to form any nation which should adopt it into a military community, more formidable for attack than Sparta, and, in some respects, as well adapted as Rome herself for the conquest of the world. He recommended to his followers integrity and justice towards each other, as the firmest bonds by which men could be knitted in society. He imposed upon them such privations as were most necessary for the discipline of an army; forbidding wine as subversive of all order, and inculcating cleanliness the better to

preserve the health of his camp. He taught his soldiers to pray together that they might be animated by one spirit, and to fast that they might bear the inevitable hardships of war. He denounced desertion from his army as one of the gravest and most deadly of sins. He promised the crown of martyrdom to those who died in defending his divine mission, and he invented a sensual paradise of ripe fruit, verdant meadows, fresh water, and fine women, where his soldiers were destined to enjoy eternal bliss in recompense for their earthly fatigues.* Before a battle the Turkish

* The ten first followers of Mahomet are supposed to possess each seventy pavilions glittering with gold and precious stones; in each of these pavilions are seven hundred beds, and round each of these beds seven hundred houris. See D'Ohsson, Tableau de l'Empire Ottoman.

commanders made a circuit of their troops, holding forth the prospect of everlasting happiness to those who should die in the cause of the true faith, and the assurance of protection from above to the armies which fought in behalf of the Koran. The soldiers repeated to one another before the action, "Either the glory of victory or the crown of martyrdom."* They believed that legions of angels hovered over their camp, and directed their weapons to the hearts of their enemies; even Mahomet himself, at the head of all the hosts of heaven, was supposed often to assist in person the combatants who fought for the propagation of his faith. Hence they were armed with invincible resolution and he-

* D'Ohsson, t. i. 222.

roic courage; hence they acquired that unanimity which was seldom found in the ranks of their enemies; hence they were never daunted by defeat, or sated by victory.

The weakness of the sovereigns of Constantinople gave ample food to Turkish valour. The prophet had commanded his disciples to make war on infidel nations, and the labour was not without its reward. The spoils of an empire once triumphant and still rich, the dazzling light of military glory, the prospect of eternal bliss in heaven as the reward for rapacity upon earth, all combined to impel the Turks onward to conquest, and to produce victory from the seeds of victory. A crumbling government fell to pieces at the touch of so vigorous an arm.

The institutions of the Turks were well contrived for maintaining a military spirit among them. In the eye of the law all Mussulmen were soldiers, and were distinguished by the name of *Askéry*, as forming a separate class from the herd of infidel subjects.* At first a third of the conquered lands were distributed among the officers and soldiers. The greater divisions of land, consisting of five hundred acres and upwards, were called *Ziamets;* the lesser, containing from three to five hundred acres, were called *Timars.* The conquests of the Ottomans were so extensive, that they were not obliged, like the Normans and Franks, to settle a captain and his troop upon the same estate; the private sol-

* D'Ohsson, t. ii. p. 268. fol.

diers held grants of their own directly from the Sultan, and their lands were cultivated exclusively by the conquered people, who paid to their new landlords a tenth of the produce. So constant was this practice, that when the Persians abandoned the country conquered by Amurat the Fourth, the Turkish soldiers refused to accept of land in a depopulated country. The *Ziams* and *Timariots* were bound by the tenure of their estates to take up arms at the summons of the Sultan, and follow him to the wars. But they considered their period of service as limited to the season from April to October, and when the latter month arrived they deserted their standards promiscuously, without permission, and returned home. Hence the wars of the Sultan upon distant frontiers

were often interrupted by the unwillingness of the feudal militia to remain long away from their own country; the army dwindled, and the war was starved. There was, however, great reward for emulation. The estates granted by the Sultans to their soldiers were not hereditary. Whenever vacancies happened, either by death or forfeiture, the Sultan had the power of filling them up by new appointments; and it is said that the same landed estate has been granted eight times in the course of one campaign.

The distinction of nobility, so great a feature in the Gothic monarchies, was unknown to the Turks. The meanest and poorest among them might aspire to the highest place next to the Sultan on the throne; there could be no greater

excitement to the valour of a conquering army. Upon a declaration of war all the inhabitants of a district from sixteen to sixty were summoned to join the standard of the Pacha, and follow the war. But they were at liberty to act according to their inclinations, and if they disliked the service, they might with impunity neglect the invitation.

To remedy the obvious defects of this system of warfare, the Sultans early established regular troops. Orkam began and Amurat completed the design. It is said that when Amurat had overcome the people of Macedonia, Servia, and Bulgaria, he found himself at a loss how to draw any profit from his conquests. An obsequious vizier advised him to claim a fifth of the young men of the conquered countries as recruits for

his army. They were instructed in the Mahometan faith, and, what was of equal or greater importance, in the Turkish discipline. They were then blest by Hagi Boktesh, a celebrated dervise, who, placing the sleeve of his gown on one of their heads, said, "Let them be called *Yengi-cheri* (young soldiers); let their countenance be ever bright, their hands victorious, their swords keen; let their spears always hang over the heads of their enemies, and wherever they go may they return with a shining face."* Afterwards from the success of the institution every fifth child, or the children of every fifth year, were taken from the Christians,† and instructed from the

* Cantemir, Hist. Otto. Emp.

† Busbequius says every third or fourth; De Re Militari, &c.

age of fourteen in appointed seminaries. There they were taught to shoot with the bow, to wrestle, and speak Turkish. Some were attached to the person of the Sultan, or the palace, or employed in the labours of arsenals and dock-yards, but the greater part were formed into companies, and constituted the most regular army that had appeared in Europe after the decline of the Roman legions. Some were to be found in every city, and almost in every small town of the empire. As long as military experience and exact discipline were unknown to the feudal states of Christendom, the Janizaries triumphed over their opponents, and their astonished enemies were forced to send missions to ascertain the causes of their undisputed superiority. A great reputation was

sedulously attached to the body of Janizaries, and the spirit of association strongly maintained. When a Janizary is sentenced to death, his name, out of respect to the corps, is struck off their list previous to execution. The Janizaries came in a short time to have much of the power and the insolence of Prætorian bands, and many a sultan has been the victim of their rage. Numbers are enrolled without belonging to the corps, the reason of which is, that all who belong to the class of Belèdy or citizens are subject to the capitation and other taxes, in the same manner as the infidels; to avoid these burdens, every Turk has himself enrolled if possible in the army.

Besides their infantry, the Turks had regular cavalry in great numbers, and

of great efficiency. Baron Busbek has described them as glittering with gold and silver; their dress formed of the finest materials, their arms consisting of a bow and arrows on one side, and a spear on the other, which they used with inconceivable dexterity.*

When the Turkish empire was in its vigour, nothing could be more regular than the arrangement of their camps. Baron Busbek, whom I have just mentioned, visited the camp by permission of the grand vizier, in a species of disguise; he bears testimony to the order and discipline, silence, decency and extraordinary cleanliness of their army.† During the march of their troops through the Turkish provinces, no excesses were

* Busbeq. ep. iii. † Ibid. ep. iii.

committed, and every article they consumed was paid for by money.* The food of the soldiers was simple: bread of flour or maize, with a few black olives, was sufficient; and a dish of vegetables with vinegar and salt was a luxury to these hardy warriors. Wine was strictly prohibited, and officers were sent beforehand to the towns where the army was to halt, to shut up the wine shops, and forbid the sale during the stay of the troops.†

All their institutions partook of the military character; spreading over lands still inhabited by millions of different faith and race, they have ever considered themselves as an armed people, occupying by right of conquest the territory

* Rycaut. p. 205. † Busbeq.

they acquired. This spirit is still every where perceptible. The two chief judges in the empire after the Mufti are called *judges of the army;* and all have in their mouths a proverb, that they gained the country by the sword, and by the sword they will maintain it.

IV. Their political institutions next merit our attention.

Having emerged from the obscurity of their original station by adopting a military form, the Turks preserved that form in the sway and regulation of their dominions. In this spirit they followed a chief, and made him the master of life and death, or as they term it, *manslayer*,* in order to secure the advantages of dis-

* Eton's Turkish Empire.

cipline and unity of command. To obey a leader, to esteem his will supreme, led to the successes of an army: they adopted it as the foundation of an empire.

A celebrated author has said, that the principle of a despotic government is fear. In this maxim there is a portion of truth, but a great want of precision. In some senses fear is the principle of every government; it is the motive which restrains all evil-doers, and preserves tranquillity in the state. An Englishman who wishes to commit an offence against the peace of society is withheld by fear as well as the Turk; the difference is that the Englishman fears the law, and the Turk the will of an individual. In another sense fear cannot be the principle of any government; it is impossible that the despotism

of one man can be founded upon the fear of all his subjects; there must be a certain number swayed by interest or passion to support his rule. Thus it is evidently impossible that the Turks should have followed their sultans to battle, that they should eagerly have rushed to meet death, and that they should have planted their standards over the fairest cities of Europe and of Asia, moved by a passion so base and so incapable of great actions as fear. It has been erroneously supposed likewise that the Turks have no such word as honour; words equivalent to honour, fame, consideration, are found, and must be found in the vocabulary of a people who prize military virtue beyond all other qualities.* In all their enterprizes

* D'Ohsson, vol. i.

the Turks were seen to vie with each other in courting danger, and the Janizaries have been known in our day to break out into sedition, because when the enemy was near they were not placed in the vanguard.

The real principle of the Turkish government was military and religious enthusiasm. The government itself, founded upon this principle, was partly military and partly religious; it was partly of the nature of a theocracy, and partly what has been called a *stratocracy*, or government by an army; the distinct powers and limits of each have never been defined, but in their history the influence of both may be clearly traced. The first in point of time was undoubtedly the military part of the government. The Othman, Osman, or Athman, who founded

the empire, was a soldier and not a priest: he commanded a band of followers as a leader in war, but he never pretended to inherit the sacred character of Mahomet and the caliphs.

The hereditary succession of the house of Othman was connected by a species of superstition with the fate of the empire, and formed the most inviolable principle of the Turkish government. But a military people, always engaged in warfare, could not trust its destinies to a woman or an infant; a male of ripe age and active disposition was, if possible, selected from the imperial family, and neither law nor custom forbade the Turks from setting aside the eldest son of the sultan, in favour of a younger brother or even a cousin. The Janizaries took advantage of a disposition so fa-

vourable to prætorian license; and a brother of the reigning sultan was, in their eyes, an instrument for extorting indulgence, or revenging neglect.* Hence every new sultan became anxious to remove relations who might become pretenders to his throne; and the first act of a Turkish monarch is usually an order for the murder of his brothers. At the death of Amurath the Third, nineteen of his sons were put to death by the successor.† In early times the sons of the sultan were entrusted with the command of provinces and of armies, but as disorders arose similar to those caused in Europe by the sons of kings during the middle ages, Solyman the First established the custom of confining the

* Busbeq. † Cantemir, p. 235.

princes of the blood in the *eski serai*, a palace assigned for that express purpose at Constantinople. They were not forbidden to marry, but their children were always put to death at the moment of their birth. The *sultanas* or princesses of the imperial blood were likewise married to the great men of the empire, but their offspring were in the same manner stifled at their entrance into life. With so many legal and customary murders, it seems extraordinary that the imperial family should have supplied a perpetual succession to the throne; but when the reigning sultan was a minor, care was taken to conceal his brothers from his fratricide purposes. We must likewise consider that the Turkish sovereign, instead of being limited, like the princes of the rest of Europe, to one wife, chosen

from a few families already connected in blood; was unrestricted in the number, the rank, the country of his women, and that the son of any of them might be declared heir to the empire.*

The second part of the Turkish government which we are to consider, is the religious; and if the military institutions of the Turks were most instrumental in acquiring the empire, the theocratic spirit which was afterwards infused into it, was most serviceable in

* In the time of Sultan Amurath the Third, thirty-two cradles were seen in the Seraglio at the same time, carrying new-born children.—Marsigli, Stato dell' Imperio Ottomanno. "It is evident the personal advantages the Turks possess over other nations are exclusively owing to their taking wives from all countries; Arab, Grecian and Persian blood all flow in the veins of an Ottoman, and conspire to make him the handsomest of human beings."—Carne's Travels in the East.

giving it stability. If the Janizaries and the army conquered kingdoms and states, the modifications and rules which have somewhat softened the barbarous spirit of military rule, and made it resemble at least a civil government, have been introduced by the priests and lawyers of the Mahometan religion.

The Turkish sultans, as I have said, wanted the sacred character which Mahomet assumed for himself, and left to his successors in the caliphate. But Selim the First, who conquered Egypt and Syria, brought back to his capital the nominal Caliph of the faithful, and obtained from him a cession of his rights. He is therefore styled Imam or pontiff, as well as sultan or lord. By thus uniting the priesthood with military command, the dynasty of the house of Oth-

man acquired a new title to the reverence of their subjects. His authority was now complete, and an article of the great Turkish code Multeka is thus conceived: "Mussulmen must be governed by an Imam, who has the right and the authority to watch over the observance of the laws, to order the execution of legal punishments, to defend the frontiers, to raise armies, to levy the tenths for the revenue, to repress rebels and robbers, to celebrate the public prayer on Fridays and on the festival of Beyram, to give judgment, to decide causes between subjects, to marry minors, and to proceed to the division of legal booty."* This article seems to establish as a principle, that monarchy is the only legitimate

* D'Ohsson, vol. i. p. 85.

form of government among Mussulmen. It also seems to unite the spiritual with the temporal authority; the Dey of Algiers, however, admits the spiritual and not the civil supremacy of the sultan. In virtue of his sacred character, the sultan obtains large additional prerogatives. It is held by Mahometan lawyers that he may kill fourteen persons in one day without cause, and without blame. Indeed, it is esteemed an honour to die by his hand; the soul of one who is killed by the sultan flies immediately to heaven, and faithful ministers of the Porte have been sometimes known to court this passport to paradise as the last reward of a life of laborious service. The Turkish sultans have thus scarcely any restraint put upon their conduct. In the eyes of the Mahometans, virtue is not a

necessary qualification of the sovereign, nor is any degree of vice a sufficient reason for his deposal.*

In all civil matters the sultan is supreme. It is held that his will is sufficient to overturn or set aside, at any moment, any law not established by the Koran, or which does not concern religion: even this limitation is only an opinion of the lawyers. In religious affairs, however, in spite of their sacred character, the sultans seem to have allowed much of the real power to escape them. The *Fetva*, or holy seal, which was affixed by the caliphs to their acts, is not in the hands of the sultans, but in those of the Ulemas. When the sultan wishes to have the sanction of religion

* Code, art. 36 and 37, apud D'Ohsson.

to any act of great importance, he is obliged to have recourse to this body, and obtain their consent.

The clerical and legal body, denominated the *Ulemas*, consists of three different classes; the doctors of law, the judges, and the ministers of religion. Of these three, the ministers of religion form the lowest class; their office requires the fewest years of study, and leads only to places of inferior rank. Indeed, the mere duty of performing divine service may be performed by a layman; and a pacha, or other great officer, appoints any members of his household to the offices of *muezzin* and *imam*, to call to prayers and say them when the people are assembled. In order to comprehend this inferiority of the priesthood, we must recollect that the Koran is not

a collection of doctrines and examples, left to be inculcated from the pulpit of the preacher; it is a code of laws, directed to be propounded and explained from the bench of the judge. It is not the recorded life and example of the prophet, to be held up in the church by eloquence and learning; it is his direct command, esteemed indeed to be the direct command of God, and ordered to be enforced by temporal punishment. Hence the highest rank in theology is the highest rank in law: the mufti is called at the same time *sheik islam*, or prelate of orthodoxy, and *fetva sahibi*, or giver of judgments. The doctors of law go through a longer study than the cadhis or judges; their commentaries and expositions are the most authentic explanation of the Koran, and theirs seems to

be the highest civil rank in Turkey. They may marry, and their property descends from father to son without the risk of confiscation. Their persons are free from injury; at least it is a general belief in Turkey that their blood cannot be shed, and the horrid punishment of pounding in a mortar, if not altogether fabulous, was hardly ever resorted to. Their sons are always preferred for admission into the Ulemas, and this body thus forms a species of aristocracy, of solidity apparently sufficient to resist the will of the sultan. The privilege of affixing the holy seal has therefore been compared to that of the French parliament in registering the edicts of the Bourbon kings. It is true, indeed, that invested with sanctity, temporal authority and hereditary wealth, the Ulemas appear

to have all the elements of solid power: but in practice this power has seldom been found to avail them against the will of the sultan. He may exile, imprison or displace them: the mufti himself may be removed by a nod; and this Mahometan hierarchy and senate have seldom been able to resist the terrors of the crown. When they have, it has been only when they have called to their aid some favourite maxim of Mahometan superstition: hence their power has been of little real benefit to the Turkish, of none to the Christian and Jewish subjects of the Porte. It is said, however, that in modern times the dread of the Ulemas has often prevented the sultan from leaving Constantinople, at times when he wished to put himself at the head of his army.

The last constitutional check on the Turkish monarchy is the mob of Constantinople. To please them the sultan must appear every Friday in public; on these occasions, if any one has an important petition to present, the prayer of which is supported by a strong body of his friends, he puts a mat upon his head, and sets fire to it: this ceremony, which is called *burning the mat*, the sultan dares not pass by without notice. If, however, the people are generally discontented, a stronger measure is resorted to; some one sets fire to a house; the sovereign is obliged to come forth to assist in extinguishing the flames, and amid the confusion and the noise, he hears those wholesome truths which the boldest of his ministers cannot venture to whisper in his ear. Yet it must not

be supposed that illegality and cruelty form the subject of popular complaint; frequent executions are as much to the taste of the people as of the sovereign, and a Turkish sultan who did not frequently shed blood, would soon fall into contempt with his subjects. A vigour beyond the law is the delight of the mob, and when they see numerous heads on the gates of the palace, they bless the wise energy of their paternal government. To preserve Constantinople and other great cities in good humour, however, especial tenderness is shown towards them in the administration of the state, and bread is always kept at a low price within their walls, although the provinces should starve to furnish this partial plenty. Nor must it be supposed that because the Turkish government allows

no liberty, it admits no license: the discontented vent their complaints freely, and a judge who does not please the parties, is often grossly outraged on the seat of justice. It is not the absence but the nature of control which forms the defect of the Turkish polity; the deposal and execution of a sultan are the sole, but not unfrequent, remedy for abuses in the administration.

Such is the perpetual character of this species of government; the evil of tyranny is suffered for a long time without hinderance or alleviation, and at length a violent course is adopted, which is in fact no cure, but a new calamity.

The civil government is carried on by the Vizier and other principal ministers. When they meet in Divan, the Sultan is

present behind a grated window, from whence he can see and hear everything, but where he is not seen. It is held that his sitting in council with his ministers would be derogatory to his dignity.

The supreme command in the provinces is vested in the *beglierbegs* and pachas. The beglierbegs are only two or at most three in number; they rule the provinces of Anatolia, Romelia, and Damascus. The pachas, who are next in rank, have the government of all the other provinces: they are distinguished after a Tartar custom, by three horse-tails on the side of their tents.

The authority of the pacha extends over the military force, the revenue, and the administration of justice. He leads the troops of the province to the place of rendezvous pointed out by the sultan,

and commands them both in the camp and in the city. He collects the revenue, and transmits it to Constantinople. He administers justice in his own person, and maintains the same disputes with the judges of his province which his sovereign carries on with the ulemas. But in the midst of all his authority and all his wealth, the most powerful pacha is still, to use a Turkish phrase, "a statue of glass," and a single blow from the hand of his master may dash him to pieces. Such is the reverence paid by Mussulmen to the unity of the supreme power, that although many great men have ruled over the provinces of Turkey, and the government of Constantinople often seems quite unable to retain its authority; independence has seldom been successfully asserted, and the pachalicks

have never yet been rendered hereditary like the fiefs of the Gothic kingdoms.

The pachas hold their offices and even their lives by a most precarious tenure. As soon as the sultan thinks their power too great, or their wealth too large for a subject, he sends an officer with secret orders to despatch the obnoxious governor. As the pachas suspect this design, they endeavour if possible to prevent its execution, and put to death the *capidgi*, or officer charged with this mission, in pretended ignorance of the authority he bears. Hence every artifice is used to effect the sultan's purpose; sometimes the capidgi appears disguised as a servant, sometimes he is the messenger carrying fresh titles and new powers to the pacha; in short, every device is practised till the pacha

is at length lulled into security, when the capidgi produces the sultan's firman, and the obedient Mussulmen instantly show their obedience by taking off the head of their master.* Yet, although it is evident that the temptation which induces the sultan to destroy his officer is the wealth he possesses, no one has ever yet tried how far honesty and poverty in office might disarm the enmity of the sovereign. Every pacha endeavours to amass a treasure; every pacha collects a hoard by extortion, oppression, and rapine; every one in succession when he is full is made to disgorge his enormous and iniquitous riches. Some of the pachas, however, contrive to retain their power for a long time. Many of

* See Volney's Travels in Syria.

them, when they have amassed treasure, and collected troops sufficient, refuse to obey the orders from Constantinople. The sultan is obliged to bear the insult, and consent to the real independence, whilst he retains the nominal homage of his officer. But the vengeance of the Porte, though suspended, is seldom abandoned; the pacha who has defied its authority is watched, courted, promoted, and when he thinks himself forgiven is suddenly assassinated; so that under this government, as weak as it is despotic, the sovereign, in order to punish a rebel, is obliged to resort to the weapon of a conspirator.

The administration of justice is as defective as any part of the government. In theory the law is extremely complex. The sacred books themselves consisting

of different parts, have four different degrees of obligation. The first is the word of the Koran, which is of divine authority, and requires undeviating obedience. The second contains the precepts of the four first Imams, and is of an authority canonical and sacred. The third is composed of the acts of Mahomet, whose example is held out for imitation, though not absolutely enforced. In the fourth class are the decisions and opinions of the learned upon disputed cases.* These commentaries alone fill a large space in the library of St. Sophia, and the opinions of former judges are extremely numerous. They are all digested in one great volume called the code Multeka, which is the universal

* D'Ohsson.

code of the empire. But as there is no appeal, the cadhis trouble themselves little with niceties of evidence or formality of precedent; and generally interpret the law by a wide and capricious discretion of their own. Causes are speedily heard, each party pleads for himself, witnesses are examined, and judgment is given forthwith. The writings containing the statement of the plaintiff's case are never allowed to occupy more than half a page.

It is evident, that even if the law were honestly administered, a power so vague and arbitrary as that of the cadhis, although possessing the advantages of rapidity and cheapness, must lead to continual injustice, from ignorance, precipitation, passion, or mistake. But the corruption of the judges aggravates the

mischiefs, and destroys all the benefits of the system. Nor does this charge rest only on the partial representations of travellers. The venality of courts of justice forms a continual object of satire in the tales and pantomimes of the people themselves. "It is difficult to do justice," said one cadhi to another, "when one of the parties is rich and the other poor." "No," replied his colleague, "I find no difficulty at all in that case, for then I decide of course for the rich; the only difficulty is when both are rich, for then I do not know on which side to incline."* Many instances might be given of the ingenuity of Turkish judges in deciding a suit by a sudden question, or an unforeseen

* D'Herbelot, Dict. Orient. Art. Cadhi.

solution; they however more resemble tales of romance than the grave reports of legal tribunals, and in almost all cases the subtilty commended in the judge has been inspired by a bribe given before the hearing of the cause.

On a par with the corruption of judges is the perjury of witnesses. A regular livelihood is obtained at Constantinople by men who infest the courts of justice, and by means of false oaths extort money from those whom they pursue. This infamous practice is encouraged by public opinion, which esteems it meritorious in a Mussulman to commit perjury against a Christian, and is protected by the law, which inflicts scarcely any punishment on a Mussulman for perjury, especially if it be against a Christian, and always con-

demns the gainer of the suit to pay the costs. Hence many a man pursued by a groundless prosecution prefers paying money to the informer to the hazard of a law-suit in which he must lose, even if proved to be in the right.

From what has been said, it might be supposed that there is no such thing as private property in Turkey. It is true that the property of all the land in the country is supposed by theory to vest in the sultan, and in the early part of their history it actually was so; but in modern times, on the payment of a certain relief or fine, the son is always allowed to succeed to his father's estate. Personal property descends according to law without any impediment. But there are two vast exceptions which, in such a country as Turkey, greatly curtail the

benefits of secure possession and legal inheritance. According to Turkish law, the property of every one employed in a public command or office devolves to the sultan, and on the death of the holder his children are left in beggary to begin the world afresh. Likewise the property of any one who dies as a criminal is confiscated for the benefit of the private treasury of the sultan. Hence the gloating eye with which the sovereign views the accumulation of wealth by his favourite officers; hence the untimely end of the great men of the empire; hence the unjust charges and fabricated crimes to which the law of confiscation in the hands of arbitrary power has always given rise. The viziers and chief ministers of state, warned by this system, put their money in the hands of

bankers, who after the fall of the favourite, are often tortured in the most horrible manner to induce them to deliver up wealth: if it were the fallen minister's so much the better; but at all events wealth. Turks, who have property in the provinces, dreading these laws, often conceal their riches beneath an appearance of wretchedness, sacrifice ease to safety, and in order to preserve the possession lose the enjoyment of fortune.

If the administration of civil justice is defective, that of criminal law seems to have hardly advanced beyond the rude time when men first discovered the advantages of order and the necessity of punishment. The power of life and death, that dreadful and extreme resource of society, seems to reside every where, and for every purpose, without

delay, without mercy, without limit. Take a single instance. The great Hassan Pacha ordered the captains of his fleet to superintend the caulking of their own ships. Upon finding one of them absent at his own house about a quarter of a mile off, he sent for a blunderbuss, and when the offender by his order came to receive his commands, shot him dead on the spot without saying a word.* The chief of the police, at Constantinople and other great towns, goes round in the day-time and at night, and executes immediately the sentences he gives. If a baker is found selling his bread by a light weight, he is hanged before his door; if any one is apprehended on the spot where a disturbance

* Eton.

takes place, he is instantly despatched. No matter if the apprentice who knew nothing of the fraud is hanged instead of the baker; no matter if a spectator loses his life instead of the actual rioter; the purpose is to create terror to the guilty, even by shedding the blood of the innocent, and the crime is punished when the criminal escapes. Inferior punishments are ordered and regulated by the same arbitrary caprice. If the officer does not think the offence worthy of death, he orders the bastinado to be applied, and sits smoking his pipe till it appears to him the culprit has been tortured sufficiently, and he is pleased to pronounce the merciful word "enough."

It not unfrequently happens that the celerity of Turkish justice is purposely displayed to awe the minds of foreigners.

A Russian minister complained to the vizier of an outrage that had been committed on persons entitled to his protection. The vizier made a horizontal motion with his hand to some of his attendants, and before the conference was over, seven heads were rolled on the floor before the face of the Russian. An English ambassador, on another occasion, was also a witness of this fatal motion of the hand in a conference he had with the vizier; when he rose to go away he saw several heads newly put up at the gate of the palace.

In the provinces, this, as well as every other function of the government, is exercised with still more injustice than in the capital. Upon hearing a report of robbers, a Pacha sends out a number of horsemen, and orders them to bring the

heads of the offenders, for each of which they are to receive a reward. Whether they find the robbers or not, these horsemen are sure to return with heads; any person in a village not owned by the usual authorities, any stray traveller, or wandering beggar, if he fall in with these savage cavalry, is sure to lose his life, and thus a number of innocent men are put to death, whilst it often happens that not one of the guilty suffers. A traveller relates that he saw the return of one of these parties with the heads dangling by their horses' sides, and the riders bearing in their looks of savage joy, rather the appearance of successful banditti than of ministers of justice.* Torture is allowed by the Turkish juris-

* Pouqueville, Voyage, &c.

prudence, or at least practised, in order to extort confession of guilt or of wealth. It must be said, however, to the honour of the Turks, that they do not practise the cruel modes of execution authorized in more polished monarchies. When the sentence of death is given, the criminal is quickly strangled; sometimes he is told that an order is come for his liberation, and as his irons are knocked off, the bowstring is put round his neck, and he dies in a moment.

The pressure of taxation weighs chiefly though not entirely upon the *unbelievers*. No Mussulman is subject to a direct tax, unless he belongs neither to the army nor the feudal militia, and then he is placed in the same rank as the Christian and Jewish subjects.

There are three great taxes, the *miri*

or land tax; a tax on personal property; and the *caratch* or poll tax. The *miri* is a tenth or fifth of the produce of the land, and seems to be payable either to the Sultan for the treasury of the empire, or to the Pachas as part of their revenue.

The tax on personal property is estimated in a very arbitrary manner, but was generally reckoned in Greece as the fourth of the profits of the tradesman.

The *caratch* or poll tax, is a tax varying in its amount from four piastres to twelve, payable by every person who has attained the age of twelve years. The age was ascertained by measurement, which is always so contrived as to solve all doubts in favour of the government. An idle question has been raised whether this tax was, as has been asserted by many travellers, a payment by the Chris-

tians for the permission to wear their heads that year. Whether styled so or not, it is certain that the Mahometans, in conquering these and other countries, imposed upon the conquered the condition of becoming Mahometans or paying tribute, or losing their heads, and this poll tax is the consequence of their choice. The *caratch* is in form a card of a certain colour, which the bearer is bound to produce whenever he is asked for it; a method of taxation which naturally tends to many abuses and vexations. But there are worse evils attending this tax. It is estimated that a certain district is capable of producing a certain sum, and the collector is answerable with his head if that sum fails to enter the treasury. This provision leads to abuses like in kind, but worse in degree, than those

which attended the collection of the *taille* in old France. In Greece, this tax and that on personal property were farmed by the Pachas to Greeks called Codja-bachis, who vexed by every kind of extortion and oppression their unfortunate countrymen. If the population diminished, or riches decreased, in a particular district, the remaining inhabitants were obliged to bear the increased burthen, and the ruin of the district was thus hastened and insured. The collector took special care to enrich himself: in the Morea it was imagined that the taxes in that province gave two millions of piastres to the Sultan, a million to the Pacha, and about 1,500,000 francs to the Codja-bachis.* Thus, to use the phrase of a celebrated orator, the people

* Pouqueville, Voyage, &c.

were the prey of a subordination of vultures.

All the regular taxes, however, are inferior in vexation to the extortions of the Pachas. A tax imposed without justice or reason, known by the name of *avaniah*, swells in proportion to the rapacity of the Pacha of the province. He has no other limit to his extortions than what his own feelings of compassion may impose.* The humanity of a Pacha to

* M. Beaujour, a very competent judge, who was many years French consul at Salonica says, "The Pacha of Salonica holds, by direct tenure, about twenty villages, from which he receives the tenth of their yearly produce; this revenue he farms for about 60 or 70,000 piastres; he collects besides an equal sum for casualties; he makes by *avanias* or extortions an 100,000 piastres, and if he be not a man of singular humanity, he extends still further this branch of revenue; if he be covetous and rapacious, he absorbs the riches of the whole country." Quoted by Thornton, Present State of Turkey.

an infidel people is indeed but a frail security, when so many motives conspire for their oppression. If their governor is ambitious, his only means of maintaining himself are by large presents to the Porte, or a force sufficient to defend his independence; if he is covetous, he unavoidably makes use of the sunshine of his prosperity to amass a treasure; if he is fond of ostentation and expense, he draws from the vitals of the people the resources for his prodigality. Thus ambition, avarice, profusion, from one or other of which passions few mortals, with the power of indulging them, are free, alike mar the happiness of the unfortunate rayahs* of Turkey. In this, as in every other part of the government,

* Rayah means subject, though generally applied only to subjects not Mussulmen.

a discretion without limits or controul is the curse of the people and of the empire. If complaints are made at Constantinople of the harshness or extortion of a Pacha, a larger gift to the Sultan, and increased annual presents to his ministers and favourites, atone for all the cruelty he may have committed, all the desolation he may have caused. Unhappy indeed was the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte: the wealth of their tyrants was drawn from their industry; the bribes that protected their oppressors were the fruits of their labour; the marine of their masters was navigated by their skill; the army that ground them to the earth was supported by their contributions; nay, by the institution of the Janizaries, the very oppressors them-

sèlves were the children of their own loins.

The policy of the Porte on the subject of commerce seems, at first sight, to be inspired by a more liberal spirit than the rest of its institutions. All foreign goods are admitted; and the foreign merchant pays a duty of only three or four per cent. But this provision does not flow from any enlightened views,—it is a concession bought from the government by foreign nations; and while the foreigner is thus moderately charged, a native merchant pays a duty double in amount. Immediate gain has been the sole motive of this policy of the government; and the permanent interests of its own subjects have been sacrificed for the sake of a little ready money. Nothing can be more

characteristic of a barbarous despotism.

The regulations which fetter internal trade serve to remove all doubt respecting the knowledge of commerce possessed by this people. Restrictions of all kinds vex industry. Corn is made a monopoly of the government; the grower is obliged to bring it to Constantinople, and sell it for less than its value, in order to swell the treasury of the Sultan, and afford profit to a minister, who by scandalous frauds adulterates the grain, and augments his share of the benefit. Various similar regulations attest the ignorance and rapacity of the Turkish government.

Besides the oppressions I have mentioned under the heads of Justice and

Taxes, it must be added that the Christian subjects of the Sultan are always treated as an inferior race, and bear in every relation of life the marks of their degradation. By a solemn fetva of the Mufti, the oaths of Christians, when unsupported by Mussulmen, are of no avail against a Mussulman. In order to give evidence in a court of justice, a Mussulman must be in a state of purity? Bajazet the First was not allowed to give his testimony as a witness because he did not say the five prayers in public, —how little, then, must be the value of a Christian oath! Besides this, while by the invariable practice of the courts of justice the perjury of a Mussulman against a Christian is slightly regarded, that of a Christian against a Mussulman

is punished with death. Hence the Christians are open to a thousand claims, and frequently have their property and their houses seized by a stranger, without a chance of obtaining redress. If a Mussulman kills a Christian, even from deliberate malice, the law, which condemns the offender, is not executed, and the criminal escapes with impunity: the least blow of a Christian against a Mussulman is visited with the heaviest penalty.

The Christians are obliged to live in houses of a dark hue, to wear a dress of a dark colour, and above all, not to wear a green turban, a white shawl, or yellow slippers. If they have fine houses, they must take care that the outside has a shabby appearance; if

they have handsome horses, they do not dare to ride them themselves.*

Degrading and invidious as these distinctions are, however, they form but a small part of the sufferings of the Christians. The iron which galled their necks was not so much the subjection of a people to an oppressive government, as the subjection of a nation to a hostile nation. The meanest Turk might treat the highest Christian with contumely and insult: a Mussulman, seeing a Greek seated in his shop, might call him forth, and make him load his baggage horse, or perform any other menial office: the oldest and most venerable Greeks might

* See Anastasius—one of the best delineations of manners ever given in any shape to the world.

be openly struck and buffeted by the youngest and lowest of Mahometans: all with impunity. The practice of carrying arms leads to the prompt indulgence of every passion; and it may well be imagined what was the condition of men of a religion that is hated, and a race that is despised, living in the constant presence of masters who have pistols at their belt and swords by their sides. The limbs, and even the lives, of the Greeks, were at the mercy of every gust of passion, and they were maimed or murdered with less forethought than the mildest rebuke is given by an English magistrate.* These are the things which, borne quietly by dastard souls, sink deep in the minds of a people who be-

* See Belzoni's, and other Travels in the East.

gin to have a sense of shame or honour; these are the injuries which, long suffered and long unresented, are yet entered in the great book of a nation, and are at length repaid with a vengeance not less full or less cruel than the wrongs they have endured.

Such being the vicious system of Turkish government, it is natural, and almost consolatory, to find that the effects it produces are weakness to the sovereign and desolation to the state. The revenue which the sultan collects from the best part of the Roman empire has been estimated at between three and four millions sterling.

Athens has been said to produce about £4500.

The most fertile provinces, even those nearest to the capital, are frequently

ravaged and overrun, sometimes by robbers, sometimes by a robber, in the shape of an independent pacha. Licentious banditti intercept the caravans, plunder the husbandman, and lay waste the country.* In Syria it often happens that the wandering tribes, when they find a pleasant spot, become fixed, and renouncing their rambling mode of life, cultivate the earth and change their

* "I have travelled through several provinces of European Turkey," says Mr. Thornton, "and cannot convey an idea of the state of desolation in which that beautiful country is left. For the space of seventy miles, between Shirk Kiliné and Carnabut, there is not an inhabitant, though the country is an earthly paradise. The extensive and pleasant village of Faki, with its houses deserted, its gardens overrun with weeds and grass, its lands waste and uncultivated, and now the resort of robbers, affects the traveller with the most painful sensations."—Thornton, vol. ii. p. 66. Such testimony of an eye-witness is worth volumes of argument.

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character. This practice might in time civilize the whole people, were it not that a fixed tribe is frequently driven, by the extortions of the pacha and his dependents, to abandon their dwellings, and flying into the midst of the desert, to seek again for the independence and freedom of an Arab life.* Thus the Turkish government not only does not promote civilization, but actually prevents the natural progress of society, and perpetuates the evils of barbarism. In the same manner, in the European provinces, the inhabitants, after losing their all by extortion, turn robbers, and become the scourge of the country. Hence the continuance of the wandering life in many parts of Syria

* Volney—Syria.

and Arabia which might admit of cultivation; hence the esteem in which the profession of a robber is held in Greece. But how enormous must be the tyranny of that government which overcomes the attachment to fixed property, one of the strongest passions of man! and how odious must be the guardians of order and law where a successful robbery is held in equal esteem with a gallant action in war against a national enemy!

The complete perversion of the moral feelings of the people is indeed another melancholy, but certain, consequence of misgovernment which is strongly perceived in Turkey. Flattery, meanness, lying, perjury, cruelty, violence of all kinds, prevail among the subjects of the Turks. In Thrace, the inhabit-

ants conceal what they have, that they may not be forced to give it all to the inquirer:* in Egypt, the people of a village will not pay the taxes till they see an armed force, and then, however small that force may be, they instantly submit. An habitual distrust poisons all intercourse between the governors and the governed: the miserable rayah, hating the law, which always acts to his oppression, and renouncing morality, which never interferes for his protection, endeavours, when he is the weaker party, to flatter, to cheat, and to betray; when he is the stronger, to destroy, to mutilate, and to murder his inhuman master.

* The reader will remember a well-known story of the Baron de Tott.

VI.—We now arrive, at last, at an inquiry into the causes which arrested the progress of the Turks. A people who carried by assault some of the richest provinces of Europe and Asia, whose army was in such a state of vigour and discipline, as, in the opinion of competent judges, to be more than a match for the forces of any Christian state, it was naturally thought would extend its conquests over Hungary, Austria, and Italy. But even failing this, it may be asked, why the Turks have not improved their domestic government, and kept pace with the Gothic nations? The same facts will go far to account for both of these results.

The conquests of the Turks were ar-

rested by causes which, however obscure at the time, it is not difficult now to perceive. As they dispersed themselves over a fertile country of immense extent, they became attached to the advantages of wealth, ease, and plenty: like those furious winds produced by the rushing of the cold air of the Pole to displace the light heated atmosphere of the Equator, when the transition has been effected, the sharp piercing blast of the north becomes in its turn the soft and spicy gale of the region it has invaded.

There was another cause, however, which checked the formidable advances of the Turks. Had the Gothic nations remained in a state of barbarism, the Turks might, for a certain time at least, have continued their victorious pro-

gress; but the invention of gunpowder, and many other arts equally important, though not so striking, gave Europe a new strength at the time she wanted it most. Of the greater part of these inventions the Turks were totally unconscious; or if they made any progress, it was so slow as to leave them far behind in the race of improvement. During the five centuries of their existence as a powerful nation, and nearly four hundred years after their possession of Constantinople, they remain in nearly the same state of pastoral ignorance as when they first left the banks of the Oxus. The great discoveries of modern Europe have been entirely lost upon them; nay, they even forbear to make use of the treasures of science which were in cir-

culation before they rose to greatness. The Baron de Tott, being desired to confer with the chief of the geometricians, asked them how many right angles there were in the angles of a triangle; the boldest of the state mathematicians, after due deliberation, learnedly replied, that it depended upon the size of the triangle. A very few years ago, their high admiral asked one of our captains if he understood the use of the compass, at the same time professing his own ignorance of it. The compass used on board their ships is adjusted to the variation of Constantinople, and they never dream that the variation is different in other latitudes. Their knowledge of other kinds is even less extensive: of geography, of history,

they have few and incorrect notions; of morals and eloquence, besides the Koran, none at all.* The logic and philosophy they pretend to teach are remnants of the dark ages,—theories and words that fill the ear but convey no idea to the mind, and are in fact

* Mr. Thornton has laboured hard to relieve the Turks from the charge of ignorance; but (stating facts with his usual candour,) he only proves, 1st, that the Arabs were a learned people, which does not bear upon the question: 2d, that the Turks have some poets, good or bad,—a fact by no means incompatible with extreme barbarism: 3d, that they have several public libraries: do they use them? are they worth the trouble? 4th, that they have a history of Alexander, King of Macedon,—whom, however, they generally confound with an imaginary king called Kander: 5th, that the invention of printing was introduced into Turkey, by a renegado, about the year 1727!!—it does not appear, however, that the Turks have made up for lost time, as they still prefer manuscripts: of course there is no need of a censorship of the press.

nothing more than ignorance in the garb of knowledge.

Astrology is still held in great esteem, and an astrologer general is maintained by the court, to determine when it is propitious for the armies to march. The superstitious belief, both of the sovereign and the people, in signs and wonders, though discountenanced by the prophet, prevails to an incredible extent. Suleyman the First, one of the greatest of the Turkish sultans, raised the siege of Corfu because there fell a shower of hail: in vain was he told that the place was so reduced that it could not hold out many days,—the hail was impressed upon his mind, and he carried off his army. An ominous importance attaches to the first words the sultan utters on entering the palace.

Amurath the Third had rode from Adrianople to secure the throne; he said, upon arriving, "I am hungry, give me something to eat;" the ministry trembled, and all sagacious persons foresaw the famine which desolated the empire in the following year, besides various other calamities by which the whole reign was afflicted.*

The barbarous ignorance of the Turks has been attributed to the belief in the Mahometan religion, and especially in predestination: but we must not forget that this was the religion of the inventors of algebra, and of the enlightened Arabs of Spain. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Cardinal Xime-

* See this, and several more instances.—D'Ohsson, t. i. p. 117 to 135.

nez ordered to be burnt a large library of Arabic books because they contained nothing on Christian theology: might it not at that time have been urged by the Arabs, that the Christian religion was the enemy, and the Mahometan the friend, of learning? might they not have quoted with triumph the *dictum* of Mahomet, that the ink of the learned is of equal value in heaven with the blood of martyrs? As little could predestination be mentioned as a sufficient cause, by itself, of mental darkness. The Scotch and the Genevese, two of the most enlightened nations, both share, in this respect, the faith of the Turks. Yet although it were not just to ascribe the ignorance of the Turks to their religious doctrines, it is impossible to deny that these doctrines have tended to perpe-

tuate its dominion. A text in the Koran, well or ill interpreted, was held to forbid the true followers of Mahomet from learning the manners and customs of other nations. The Turks would not adopt printing, because much sanctity was attached to the writing of the sacred volume; and they declined to use clocks, lest the prescribed custom of calling the people to prayers by the voice should become of less reverence.* They treated foreign nations with the utmost contempt, on the ground of their infidelity, and consequently neglected the arts of foreign invention. A similar remark may be made respecting predestination. There certainly never was a nation which carried so far into the

* Busbeq. Epis. 3.

daily business of life this metaphysical doctrine. In the days of their growing greatness it armed them with desperate courage and unconquerable fortitude. At the moment of an assault they faced the hottest fire of cannon and musketry, convinced that no ball could reach them unless it had been so destined from eternity: after the most fatal reverse, they comforted themselves with thinking that it was the will of God, and that no human efforts could have done more. But when the empire had reached its apex, and the arts of peace were more requisite than those of war, the same doctrine had an opposite effect, and became the most effectual bar to the progress of the nation:—it is a resource for indolence, a motive to apathy, an excuse for ignorance. If an

unskilful physician kills all his patients, it is the will of God; if an oppressive governor lays waste his province, it is still the will of God. To submit to injustice, extortion, and tyranny, is a proof of the most sublime piety. To avoid the plague, to provide means for the preservation of health, to learn new arts, to endeavour, in short, to surmount any of those dangers and inconveniences which Providence seems to have placed in our way as an excitement to industry, is, in the belief of a Turk, an impious interference with the decrees of the Almighty.

Thus, although the Mahometan religion cannot be held sufficient to account for the persevering ignorance of the Turks, yet it must be allowed to make them contented with their inferiority,

and proud of their shame. The real causes of their backwardness are, perhaps, 1st, That they belong to a race which has not the genius of literature or mechanical improvement. However unphilosophical this reason may sound, perhaps no better can be given to account for the Indians remaining savages or slaves on the continent of that America where Englishmen and Spaniards have introduced all the arts of civilized life. But, 2dly, Turkey has from the beginning been afflicted by a despotism more destructive than the plague in her cities and the simoom in her deserts. That despotism, full and untempered, is a cause of barbarism, no one will now deny; the only question worth discussing here, is the cause of that despotism. It is indeed an obvious and easy re-

source, to attribute the arbitrary monarchy of these countries to the nature of the climate in which it is found: but heat, although it certainly tends to exalt the imagination and repress the activity of the body, and is, therefore, favourable to despotism, has been often proved to be unequal to overcome, or even paralyse, the force of institutions created and established by man. So much, however, may be conceded,—that an arbitrary form of government once settled and confirmed, a warm climate indisposes men to the exertions necessary to shake off its yoke. Under a northern sky, man is, by necessity, in perpetual activity; the exertions required to obtain a warm covering and a secure shelter must rouse him into motion; these once obtained, a long winter and social

evenings produce study, meditation, and a conflict of opinions. But in a southern climate, the sun and the atmosphere afford enjoyment and invite to indolence; the luxurious lassitude they create at once deters men from interfering with their government, and consoles them under its oppressions. Yet physical causes will surely not be sufficient to account for the slavery of a land whose rocks beheld the fall of Leonidas, and whose cities echoed with the philippics of Demosthenes: other reasons must be sought for; and in this moral inquiry, as in experimental philosophy, we must obtain truth by a careful induction from particulars.

The Turks and Othmans were originally as free as the nations to which they are similar in habits—the Huns,

the Scythians, the Tartars. Their constant occupation, war, requires a single leader; the merit and valour of his followers oblige him to be a limited, and not an arbitrary, sovereign; hence a species of society somewhat of a feudal nature,—a kind of government which subsists to this day among the Circassian tribes on the frontiers of Russia.* The leader of a few hundred families can only inspire confidence by superior qualities, and must not venture to undertake an enterprise to which his people are averse. But how has it happened, it may be asked, that this rude feudal sketch has been developed into forms of government so completely different as those of Germany and Turkey? A short

* See the Travels of Professor Pallas.

view of the facts will perhaps answer the question.

1. In the first place, the conquerors of the rest of Europe,—the Franks in France, the Normans in England, the Goths in Spain,—became, in process of time, mixed with the conquered; but in Turkey no such union has taken place. The opinions of the Turkish people, still more than the letter of the law, have prevented any marriages of the Mahometan women with their Christian and Jewish subjects. They have remained to this hour separate and distinct as on the first day of the conquest. It is obvious how this separation prevents any advances towards improvement in the general aspect of the government. The conquered subjects of the Turks occupy all those stations from

which, in the rest of Europe, freedom has made her way; they are the mechanics, the tradesmen, the merchants of society, but to political importance they never can aspire: a bar is placed to their advance by the whole governing class of the community, and they are kept in subjection by a sovereign nation armed to prevent their encroachments. Nor ought it to escape our attention, that this separation tends strongly to prevent the improvement of the Turks themselves. Born masters of a servile and industrious population, they give themselves up to the listlessness of an hereditary aristocracy; and if they have much of the politeness and urbanity, they have likewise much of the arrogance, sensuality, and licentiousness of an old order of nobility. They exercise

power without enjoying liberty; and Sparta, to our own day, has abounded with Helots, though it has no freemen.

2. The next difficulty for explanation is the political servitude of the Turks themselves. The nobility of Europe, it must be remarked, made their possessions in land hereditary, and almost independent; entrenched behind the moats and battlements of their castles, they could set at defiance their nominal sovereign, if he presumed to push his pretensions beyond a very limited extent. With the revival of letters, the nobility of these countries took another and still more important station in society: in England they joined with the assertors of liberty; but even in Germany, France, and Spain, they constituted a haughty, jealous, and indestructible body, checking, by the

combined influence of established laws, polished manners, and humane literature, the wanton caprices in which the sovereign might otherwise have indulged. If, during the latter portion of the period which has elapsed since the revival of letters, they have been obstacles to the general acknowledgement of the rights of the people, in the early parts of it, it must be confessed they tempered the spirit of despotism into the more refined genius of legal monarchy. But in Turkey there has been no such middle power between the different classes of society; what is not government is slave.* The Sultan, uncontrouled in his

* "Ce qui n'est pas gouvernement est peuple," says Volney. I am happy in not being able to translate exactly his expression. The *populus* of the Romans was degraded by the French to a word of such ignoble meaning, that at the revolution it was

choice, may take his ministers at once from the baker's shop or the butcher's shambles. We might applaud this democratic equality, if merit or capacity directed his selection; but the most ignorant and the most incapable may please the Sultan's taste, and are often preferred to the highest posts in the empire. Their fall is equally rapid; the vizier himself, though he enjoys the full exercise of imperial power, and seems to want nothing but the title of Sultan, may yet, for the slightest cause, be at any moment degraded or strangled. Birth confers no privilege in any part of the empire. It was the first and most anxious care of the Turkish government

abandoned, and *nation* substituted in its stead. The English, more to their credit, have preserved the ancient dignity of the term.

after their conquest, to destroy the privileges of nobility in the Greek provinces; among the Turks themselves, no honour, no rank, no greatness is known but that which is derived from the unlimited will of the Sultan. In the countries where this sway is acknowledged, there is nothing but a pyramid and a plain; the huge colossal mass of the despot, and the low, unvaried level of the people. Unfortunately these causes, which have so long maintained despotism in Turkey, seem likely to have the same influence for all time to come. It has become a point of religious faith, that the sovereign, at once Sultan and Imam, should be despotic lord of the lives and property of his subjects, and the constitution of society, as we have

seen, confirms his power. But were we to suppose it possible that the Turks should establish a controul upon their government, how would such a change benefit the millions of subjects who partake not of their faith, and are the objects of their contempt? So long as fanaticism retains its influence over their minds, the Christians must look for contumely, insult, and injury: race, religion, manners, policy, all forbid that the Turks should ever be the just and righteous governors of the Christian people of their provinces. Some have pleased their fancy with the notion of an extraordinary sultan, assisted by an extraordinary vizier, pushing forward the Turks in the path of knowledge and civilization; if such an one were to arise, he would pro-

bably be strangled, and his successor would repeal his laws and regulations.

The Turks owed the empire to religious and military fanaticism: with the extension of their conquests the military spirit declined, but religious fanaticism remained, and enabled them to withstand the armies of the Christian powers. But as the art of war became more and more enlightened by science, a new dilemma presented itself to the Turks; either they must gain the knowledge of their opponents, or they must fight them without it. If they attempt to acquire knowledge, and adopt all the precau-

* This is the favourite vision of D'Ohsson, who always maintains that the faults of the Turks are owing to the abuse of their institutions, and not to the institutions themselves. The abolition of the Janizaries seems a step indeed, but it is a step only to a radical reform.

tions which are now used to insure victory, they must lose their fanaticism, the inseparable companion of their ignorance; if they prefer the spirit of the soldier to the improvement of the art, how great must be the disproportion between an ill-disciplined, ill-provided army, and the legions which have decided the battles and swayed the fate of modern Europe!

THE END.

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